

*WASHINGTON, D.C.* - Congressman John Hall (NY-19) voted today to pass the Fiscal Year 2011 National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 5136. This historic piece of legislation contains many provisions aimed to boost our Armed Forces and improve the lives of service members and their families.

One amendment that was added to the bill when it came to the House for a vote puts our Armed Forces on the road to repeal the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy that forces gay service members to hide their sexual orientation and forces them to leave the service if it is revealed.

“The time has long since passed in this country to end this unjust and discriminatory policy that taints our military,” said Congressman Hall. “It shouldn’t matter if a service person is gay, lesbian or straight. All that matters is that they are willing to risk their lives to defend our country, and they can get the job done.”

An amendment introduced by Congressman Patrick Murphy (PA-8) requires the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” after the completion of a review of the policy by the Department of Defense. The amendment, which passed by a vote of 235-194, also requires the President, the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs to certify that the repeal will not affect military readiness or effectiveness.

The Defense bill also offers a 1.9 percent pay increase for the members of our military and extends TRICARE benefits to the children of service members and retirees until they reach age 26. The bill reinvests in nuclear non-proliferation programs and focuses U.S. missile defense on high-priority threats like North Korea.

Congressman Hall also supported a number of amendments aimed at preserving American jobs and shaving defense spending. An amendment to ensure that illegal foreign subsidies to overseas companies will not lead to unfair competition was passed with Congressman Hall’s support. He also voted in favor of an amendment that failed that would have stripped almost \$3 billion in wasteful spending for the extra engine for the F-135 Joint Strike Fighter.

“This bill takes important steps for the security of our nation and the well-being of our military,” said Congressman Hall. “With the passage of this defense bill, our soldiers will have more resources to protect themselves in the field and to care for the families they leave behind and they will have the confidence that every American stands with them to protect our country.”

